IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-44 (Canceled)

45. (Previously Amended) A medical device, comprising:
a hollow barrel having a forward end and a first connector;
a needle assembly, comprising:
a needle having a sharpened tip operable between a projecting position in which the sharpened tip of the needle projects forwardly from the barrel and a retracted position in which the sharpened tip is retracted rearwardly;
a biasing element biasing the needle toward the retracted position; and
a second connector that is cooperable with the first connector to attach the needle assembly to the barrel;
a plunger displaceable in the barrel to a terminal position in which the plunger is adjacent the forward end of the barrel, said plunger having an internal cavity for receiving the sharpened tip of the needle in the retracted position and a cover on a forward end of the plunger covering the internal cavity,
wherein, upon pushing ~~the~~ a rearward end of the plunger forwardly after the plunger is in the terminal position, the cover of the plunger is removed from the end of the plunger and the needle is released from the projecting position so that the biasing element displaces the sharpened tip of the needle into the retracted position in the cavity.

46. (Previously Amended) The device according to claim 45 further comprising a needle retainer holding the needle in the projecting position against the bias of the biasing element.

47. Canceled

48. (Previously Amended) The device according to claim 45 wherein the first connector and the second connector are releasably connectable.

49. (Previously Added) The device according to claim 48 wherein the first and second connectors comprise mating threads.

50. (Previously Amended) The device according to claim 45 wherein the cover is severed from of the plunger when a predetermined normal force is exerted on the rearward end of the plunger after the plunger is displaced into the terminal position.

51. (Previously Amended) A safety medical device, comprising:
a hollow barrel having a forward end and a first connector;
a needle having a sharpened tip operable between a projecting position and a retracted position in which the sharpened tip is retracted rearwardly;
a plunger displaceable in the barrel to a forward position to provide an injection, said plunger comprising:
an internal cavity for receiving the needle in the retracted position; and
a cover on a forward end of the plunger covering the internal cavity,
a biasing element biasing the needle toward the retracted position;
a housing for receiving the biasing element and a portion of the needle when the needle is in the projecting position, wherein the housing comprises a second connector that is cooperable with the first connector to connect the housing, needle and biasing element to the barrel;
wherein, upon pushing a rearward end of the plunger forwardly after the plunger is in the forward position, the cover of the plunger is removed from the forward end of the plunger and the needle is released from the projecting position so that the biasing element displaces the needle into the retracted position in the cavity.

52. (Previously Amended) The device according to claim 51 further comprising a needle retainer holding the needle in the projecting position against the bias of the biasing element.

53. Canceled.

54. (Previously Amended) The device according to claim 51 wherein the first connector and the second connector are releasably connectable.

55. (Previously Added) The device according to claim 54 wherein the first and second connectors comprise mating threads.

56. (Previously Amended) The device according to claim 51 wherein the cover is severed from the plunger when a predetermined force is exerted on the rearward end of the plunger after the plunger is displaced forwardly.

57. (Previously Amended) A method for injecting fluid, comprising the steps of:

providing a medical device having a hollow housing having a first connector, a plunger displaceable within the housing, wherein the plunger has an internal cavity and a cover covering an opening to the cavity;

providing a needle having a sharpened forward tip, a spring connected with the needle, and a second connector cooperable with the first connector;

connecting the second connector to the first connector to attach the needle and spring to the housing, so that the forward tip of the needle projects forwardly from the housing while the spring is biasing the needle rearwardly;

filling the barrel with a quantity of medicinal fluid;

pushing the plunger forwardly within the housing to expel fluid from the housing through the needle;

removing the cover from an end of the plunger; and

retracting the sharpened forward tip of the needle into the cavity in the plunger after the cover is removed from the plunger.

58. (Previously Added) The method of claim 57 comprising the step of locking the plunger to prevent relative displacement between the plunger and the housing after the needle is retracted.

59. (Previously Added) The method of claim 57 wherein the first connector is a first threaded portion and the second connector is a second threaded portion and the step of connecting comprises threading the first and second threaded portions together.

60. (Previously Added) The method of claim 57 wherein the step of removing the cover comprises severing the cover, such that the cover is displaced into the housing during retraction of the needle.

61. (Previously Added) The method of claim 57 comprising the steps of providing a holder for holding the needle in a projecting position against the bias of the spring, and the step of pushing on a rearward end of the plunger to release the needle from the holder so that the spring can retract the needle.

62. (Previously Added) The method of claim 57 comprising the step of pushing forwardly on a rearward end of the plunger to release the needle so that the spring can retract the needle.

63. (Previously Amended) A method for injecting fluid, comprising the steps of:

providing a medical device having a hollow housing having a first connector, a plunger displaceable within the housing, wherein the plunger has an

internal cavity;

providing a needle assembly comprising a needle having a sharpened tip, a spring connected with the needle, and a hub having a second connector cooperable with the first connector;

connecting the second connector to the first connector to attach the needle assembly to the housing while the spring is biasing the needle rearwardly;

filling the housing with a quantity of medicinal fluid;

pushing the plunger forwardly within the housing to expel fluid from the housing through the needle;

severing a portion of the plunger to provide access to the cavity; and

retracting the sharpened tip of the needle into the cavity in the plunger after severing the portion of the plunger.

64. (Previously Added) The method of claim 63 comprising the step of locking the plunger to prevent relative displacement between the plunger and the housing after the needle is retracted.

65. (Previously Added) The method of claim 63 wherein the first connector is a first threaded portion and the second connector is a second threaded portion and the step of connecting comprises threading the first and second threaded portions together.

66. (Previously Added) The method of claim 63 wherein the severed portion of the plunger is displaced into the housing during retraction of the needle.

67. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 63 wherein the needle assembly comprises a holder for holding the needle in a projecting position against the bias of the spring, and the method comprises the step of pushing on a rearward end of the plunger to release the needle from the holder so that the spring can retract

the needle.

68. (Previously Added) The method of claim 63 comprising the step of pushing forwardly on a rearward end of the plunger to release the needle so that the spring can retract the needle.

69. (Previously Added) A medical device, comprising:
a hollow barrel having a forward end and a first connector;
a needle assembly, comprising:
a needle having a length and a sharpened tip operable between a projecting position in which the sharpened tip of the needle projects forwardly from the barrel and a retracted position in which the sharpened tip is retracted rearwardly;
a biasing element biasing the needle toward the retracted position; and
a second connector that is cooperable with the first connector to attach the needle assembly to the barrel;
a plunger displaceable in the barrel to displace fluid through the needle, wherein the plunger comprises:
an internal cavity having a length sufficient to receive the length of the needle; and
a cover on a forward end of the plunger covering the internal cavity,
wherein pushing forwardly upon a rearward end of the plunger causes the cover of the plunger to be removed from the forward end of the plunger and the needle to be released from the projecting position so that the biasing element displaces the sharpened tip of the needle into the cavity.

70. (Previously Added) The device of claim 69 wherein the needle assembly comprises a needle retainer releasably retaining the needle against the bias of the biasing element.

71. (Previously Added) The device of claim 69 wherein the needle assembly comprises a housing for housing the biasing element, wherein a breakable connection releasably connects the needle with the housing, such that upon pushing forward upon the rearward end of the plunger, the breakable connection is broken thereby releasing the needle.

72. (Previously Added) The device of claim 69 wherein the cavity in the plunger is configured to receive the biasing element and the needle, such that a portion of the biasing element enters the cavity when the needle is retracted.

73. (Previously Added) The device of claim 69 wherein the needle assembly comprises a block connected to the needle for releasably retaining the needle against the bias of the biasing element, wherein the block is displaced into the cavity in the plunger when the needle is retracted.